



Natural Heritage &
Endangered Species
Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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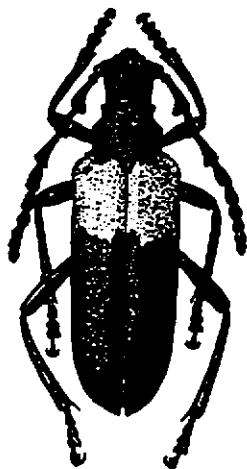
MASSACHUSETTS SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Elderberry Long-horned Beetle (*Desmocerus palliatus*)

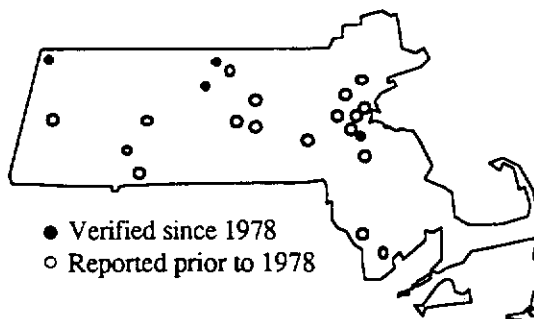
DESCRIPTION: The Elderberry Long-horned Beetle is one of the most striking beetles found in Massachusetts. It is a member of the family Cerambycidae, or long-horned beetles. The entire body is a dark metallic blue except for the anterior third of its outer wing, which is bright gold or orange in color. It is approximately 25 mm. (1 in.) long and 7 mm. (0.3 in.) wide. The antennae of the male extend to the hind third of the wing. Those of the female extend to the middle of the wing. The antennae of both sexes are characterized by a thickening at the end of the middle segments earning the species its alternate name "Cloaked Knotty-Horn Beetle".

SIMILAR SPECIES: The Elderberry Long-horned Beetle is not easily confused with any other beetle species in Massachusetts. Its relatively large size and distinctive bright coloration are excellent field marks.

RANGE: The Elderberry Long-horned Beetle is found throughout the northeastern half of the United States and parts of eastern Canada. It is known from Massachusetts and Connecticut south to Virginia and North Carolina and west to Indiana and Kansas. In Canada it has been found in Ontario.



Dillon and Dillon. The Common Beetles
of Eastern North America. 1972.



Massachusetts Distribution by Town

ECOLOGY/LIFE HISTORY: The flight period of adult Elderberry Long-horned Beetles in Massachusetts is known to extend from at least June 5 to August 9. Most observations of adults have been made between mid-June and mid-July. Adults nearly always occur in close association with elderberry bushes (Sambucus spp.), where they are usually found on the leaves or flowers. The eggs are laid on the leaves or stems of elderberry. After hatching, the larvae bore into the stems of the host plant and create long burrows running along the axis of the stem. The larvae of the Elderberry Long-horned Beetle are a creamy white color with a brown head and black mandibles. When full grown, the larvae are approximately the same length as the adults. It should be noted that larvae of the Elder Shoot Borer Moth (Achatodes zeae) also bore into the stems of elderberry bushes. Larvae of both the beetle and the moth may kill individual shoots of the elderberry by their feeding activities.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS: The Elderberry Long-horned Beetle was formerly widespread in Massachusetts but there are only a few recent records confirming its continued existence in the state. It was documented historically from at least 22 towns, but has been reported from only 4 towns since 1978. The reasons for its apparent decline are unknown. The Elderberry Long-horned Beetle is currently listed as a "Species of Special Concern" in the state.